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2002HANOI00430 - UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01
	VCE-00	DCP-01	NSAE-00	SCT-00	TEST-00	USIE-00	ASDS-01
	IIP-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/005W	
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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5603  
INFO AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY  
ASEAN COLLECTIVE  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS HANOI 000430

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV, EAP/RSP, AND S/CT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [VM](#) [TH](#) [ASEAN](#) [CTERR](#)

SUBJECT: MFA ON ASEAN PHUKET MEETING --  
- VIETNAM WANTS ASEAN "TERRORISM FREE"

REF: A. BANGKOK 1461 B. FBIS SEP20020225000071

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: FM NIEN MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR A  
"TERRORISM-FREE" ASEAN REGION WITHIN 15 YEARS AT THE RECENT  
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PHUKET INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS. THE FOREIGN MINISTERS AGREED  
IN PRINCIPLE ON STRENGTHENING COUNTER-TERRORISM EFFORTS  
THROUGH ENHANCED LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION, IMPROVED  
INFORMATION SHARING, AND OTHER MULTI-LATERAL EFFORTS SUCH AS  
CONTINUED MONITORING OF SUSPECT FINANCIAL TRANSFERS AND THE  
TRANSIT OF SUSPECT INDIVIDUALS WITHIN AND THROUGH THE  
REGION. FM NIEN ALSO LINKED THE REDUCTION OF TERRORIST  
THREATS TO THE NEED FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) TERRORIST FREE ZONE: ACCORDING TO MFA ASEAN  
DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL LE CHI DUNG, FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DY  
NIEN AT THE FEBRUARY 21 ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN  
PHUKET URGED HIS COLLEAGUES TO STRIVE TO ERADICATE TERRORISM  
WITHIN ASEAN OVER THE NEXT 10-15 YEARS. FM NIEN PUSHED FOR  
SUCH A BENCHMARK SO THAT ALL THE ASEAN MEMBERS HAD A COMMON  
LONG-TERM GOAL TOWARD WHICH TO STRIVE WHEN COMBATING  
TERRORISM, DUNG CLAIMED, NOTING THAT VIETNAM WANTS FUTURE  
ASEAN COUNTER-TERRORISM EFFORTS TO BE MULTILATERAL IN FOCUS.  
DUNG ADDED THAT FM NIEN ENVISIONED THE FOREIGN MINISTRIES OF  
ASEAN MEMBERS LEADING THE COORDINATION OF FUTURE COUNTER  
TERRORIST EFFORTS. FM NIEN ALSO REPORTEDLY SUGGESTED THAT  
ASEAN MEMBERS' NATIONAL POLICE FORCES COOPERATE IN SHARING  
INFORMATION AND TACTICS THAT HAVE PROVEN SUCCESSFUL IN  
COMBATING TERRORISM WITHIN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES. IN RESPONSE  
TO A QUESTION, DUNG WAS CAREFUL TO STATE THAT THIS WOULD NOT  
NECESSARILY INVOLVE SHARING OF INTELLIGENCE, BUT RATHER  
SHARING USEFUL AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE.

[1](#)3. (SBU) IMPLEMENTATION: VIETNAM FORESEES NEW CONCRETE  
COUNTER-TERRORISM MEASURES TO MATERIALIZE BY THIS SUMMER,  
DUNG NOTED. DURING UPCOMING ASEAN MEETINGS IN BRUNEI AND  
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KUALA LUMPUR, SPECIALISTS WILL COME TOGETHER TO DISCUSS  
FUTURE LAW-ENFORCEMENT AND MFA COOPERATION IN GREATER  
DETAIL. DUNG EXPRESSED VIETNAM'S HOPE THAT, DURING THESE  
MEETINGS, STRONGER CONCRETE MEASURES WILL BE AGREED UPON IN  
ORDER TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION.

[1](#)4. (SBU) POVERTY ALLIEVIATION: HOWEVER, FM NIEN'S PRIMARY  
FOCUS FOR COMBATING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM CENTERED ON  
POVERTY ALLEVIATION, ACCORDING TO DUNG. FM NIEN ARGUED THAT  
MANY OF THE RANKS OF TERRORIST CELLS FOUND IN OTHER ASEAN  
STATES, NOTABLY INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA, WERE FILLED WITH THE  
POOREST SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY. HE ALSO REPORTEDLY ARGUED THAT  
THE PEOPLE ATTRACTED TO TERRORISM WERE DRAWN TO THESE GROUPS  
DUE TO LACK OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS  
DISGRUNTLEMENT WITH THEIR GOVERNMENTS DUE TO THEIR POOR  
ECONOMIC STATUS. DUNG SAID THAT FM NIEN HAD ARGUED THAT THE  
BEST MEANS OF COMBATING TERRORISM WAS TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR THESE POTENTIAL RECRUITS/MILITANTS, AND,  
IN SO DOING, LIMIT THE APPEAL OF TERRORISM. DUNG CLAIMED

THAT FM NIEN FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT IMPROVED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE POOREST PEOPLES OF ASEAN, COMBINED WITH A COORDINATED LAW ENFORCEMENT APPROACH, WILL LIMIT THE GROWTH OF TERRORISM WITHIN ASEAN.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: FM NIEN'S FOCUS ON IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ASEAN'S POOREST CITIZENS SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING, GIVEN THAT VIETNAM HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF SHAPING THE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT SHRINKING THE "DEVELOPMENT GAP" AMONG ASEAN MEMBER STATES. VIETNAM'S APPARENT WILLINGNESS WITHIN ASEAN TO SPEAK OUT FORCEFULLY ON COUNTER-TERRORISM IS NONETHELESS A WELCOME DEVELOPMENT.

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